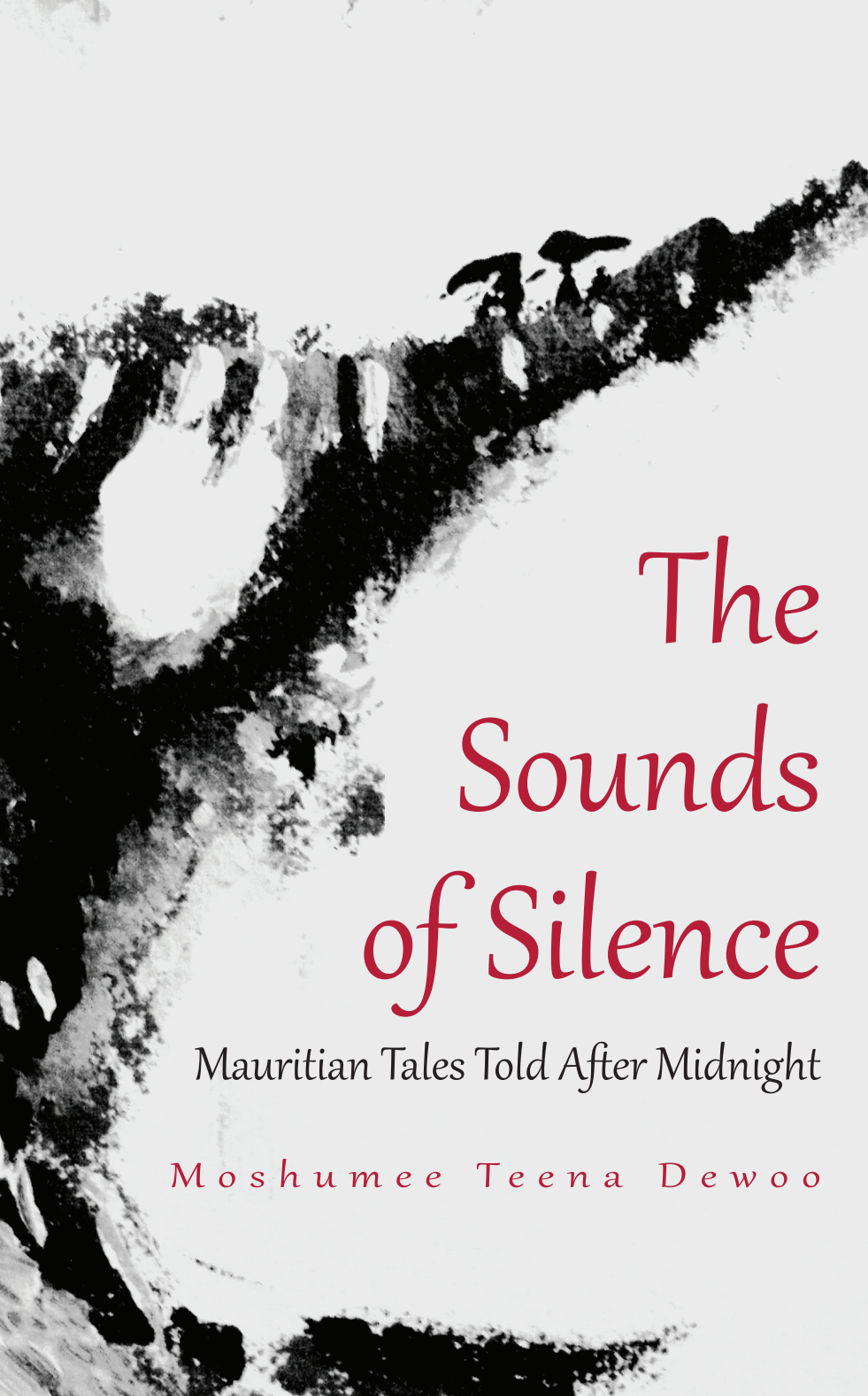




The Sounds of Silence

Mauritian Tales Told After Midnight

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THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

Mauritian Tales Told After Midnight

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Langaa Research & Publishing CIG
Mankon, Bamenda

Publisher

Langaa RPCIG

Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group

P.O. Box 902 Mankon

Bamenda

North West Region

Cameroon

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www.langaa-rpcig.net

Distributed in and outside N. America by African Books Collective

orders@africanbookscollective.com

www.africanbookcollective.com

ISBN: 9956-791-85-7

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Preface

In lieu of an introduction, I would rather the reader explores the following poem, *The Demon God*, that much like the rest of this selection, is an echo of things that I have seen, stories that I have heard, words muffled in dark spaces about the sadness, passion, love and hate of everyday life, of a past, a future, Mauritius...a world that is mine...

The Demon God travels through all the themes that I approach in *The Sounds of Silence*, including forced migration, the idea of belonging to a homeland, loss, identity, disease, hatred, family, loss, death, war, the sea and love, amongst many others.

Perhaps I should not divulge too much about those stories that unravel in *The Sounds of Silence* and instead let the reader himself find meaning to them. After all, that is what poetry is about...

The Demon God

A land of myth
Mysterious isle
The old Count¹ chant
Cherub beguile

Of past and future
In robe he'd preach
To Legions anew
New world to reach

¹ Count Botis, Demon-Prince and President in Hell who tells of all things, future and past

Through the Crow's² Eyes

In whispers silent
Blind and deaf
Headless children
Floated in death

In repose slow
Drowned skin and bone
Flesh rot
To the pumice stone

Over the sea
And under the sail
The gulls at night
Cried mothers pale

To the Locker
In somber sighs
The crow's children
Faded in lullabies

² The crow's nest is the lookout platform on top of a ship's mast

Hush!

Hush! Speak no man's breath
Say not the numbness
The pain
Over a long worn dress
Haunted by the mirth of a child's bless
And the green of the winter cress

Hush! Speak no man's breath
Ask not the torment
The pain
Of bleeding eyes vacant
Glaring to the Tamer's trident
Fearful of the sounds distant

Hush! Speak no man's breath
Scream not the way
The pain
Speak not where the fallen lay
Speak not where the fallen stray
Here and there and far away

The Jealous God

The Word revealed
Immortal flesh
And in Notre Dame
Rose Akel Esh
To the Goat's Sigil
The Viper's horn
White candles burnt
The Crown of scorn

Skeleton Ship

By her guns they rise
To forever the quest
Carried not to angels
But to sail
The dark endless

Aye! Aye!
In Abe's bosom they rest!

They must pay their debt
To nature
Man, God
And land
Bereft of life, forever restless

Aye! Aye!
Ghostly crew in a mare's nest!

Men long dead
Seek the sea
Seek the sun
Ask for peace
And dream of tranquillity

Aye! Aye!
Salvation awaits...

But 'tis only for the blessed!

The Cohort

When somber night
Passed darkened day
And no one was seen
On the streets of grey

A scent so foul
In Hecate's myrrh³
Assumed a howl
A song of blur

Masked widows prayed
To Kala's moon⁴
As Kali⁵ rose
Above the dune

³ Hecate, Greek goddess of witchcraft, magic, the night, moon, ghosts and necromancy

⁴ Shiva's moon rests above his head

⁵ Kali is Shiva's cohort, the other side of his personality, his protector

The Cohort's Garland

Buried deep
She lay not still
Depraved and vile
She longed to kill

Upon a fire
Blazing bright
We heard her bane
To heaven's height

She moaned till dawn
Her charm was made
Khagda⁶ in hand
And a human head

⁶Kali's spear or sword

The Cavalry's March

Of modest birth
To the Lady sworn

With honour they march
No malice shown

The Commander⁷ sings
The Lady is but fool

Twenty batteries roll
Twenty men not too cruel

⁷ Kartikeya, Hindu god of war, also known as the Commander, or the General who leads the Kshatriyas, Indian warrior caste

The Kiss

I am an old butterfly
I have lived, seen, thought and grown
Much love I have felt
But today, of hope I am forlorn
For the dirty Ferryman
Rises to kiss me
Could it be a fresh endeavour?
Would you write me in history?
I see tarnished souls
Sentenced to an eternity in hell
Vanished from the skies
To the now forgotten chapel
My wings fall to the ark
Tasks undone must end that way...
Perhaps my time is all too brief!!!
“Do not lengthen it”, the angels say

I am a butterfly...In crimson I lay
I am a butterfly...I am old of day

Memoirs of a battle

I am a butterfly
And my breath is done
I am but a dull creature
Soon to be forgotten

The sadistic clock pushes me
To shores where creatures live
And dreams go wandering
Over withered field

Cast into darkness
The lost Gargoyles tease me
And a tormented organ calls
From the pale light, unsteady

The calming breeze lures
Ruby on green cotton
Marring a heart
The world would not fathom

I am a butterfly
And my breath is done
I am but an old creature
Soon to be forgotten

The Swan Song

Upon a field of flowers
Sweet scent of dawn
I mused by my shed
Held my baton

Upon a field of flowers
Salt scent of tear
The Bird had soared
Our plates too near

Upon a field of flowers
Foul scent of spoil
I waved to my brothers
Tonight in soil

Dust and Pebble

On two sticks
The Prince had turned
Sinful fingers
On cold skin burned

The Princess wept
Her hand injured
Seven hung at the cleft
She never was cured

She sculpted their names
On her body cathedral
It was but a track
Made of dust and pebble

Blissful Chaos

She thought she could explain
Why she could not give up on you...
For she made a wish in all towns of the world
And found cure where she least expected to
From what she had tasted of desire
From what she had tasted of you
She would favour that fire
The light that blessed you

There she was,
To the very edge of the earth,
The sky, the sea
And your eyes, wide and warm
With liquid coal
Full of alibis
But never a single promise
No certainty

Nothing to make her happy
Everything to keep her alive...
And she would hold on tonight
Trying to find ways to thank you
Hoping you would not mind
If she forgot
Only one more time
To give up on you

Undone

They wake up so many times
To angry dreams and barren attention
And weakened under the weight
Shatters of their past linger warm on leaf
As caterpillars become butterflies
Bringing monsters to life

They wake up so many times
Trying to fly to the sky...
But the flower on the tree blossoms
It leashes temptation
As filthy hands count raindrops
And, in chaotic suicides some hear melody...

They wake up so many times
Trying to remember the sky
Praying to fly with the gods
Hoping to be fast buried
As murmurs choke on lost voices
And we know they pray

To wake in coffins
That we bury chaste...

Thoughts and words

Thoughts
And words
As time
Never end

Souls
And swords
As time
Never bend

Liquid Diamond

Storm clouds billow
To eclipse the sunlight
As glazing tears and a soaring soul
Gather rainy days in sight

On the hill of liquid darkness
And violent delight
A marble tribute,
A forgotten pagan knight

To whom no dream has done justice
Who, in triumph fades
Like fire and powder
And in dreams, escapes

Like speed, wind and freedom
Intense, consuming
Then, the sudden agony...
Memories break off in

In one place they might hold true
One place they will always belong to
A place full of light
A land of peacock blue

Bright by the sparkle of skin
Insubstantial, mesmerising

Natural high

Not the best cut diamond
Or the reddest rose
Could amount to
When you hold her close...

Out of all men,
When everything is said and done,
When the night is over
She chooses just one

She has tried to say
That you are the sun that lights up her life,
The wind that keeps her cool on a hot summer day,
The sweet incense that keeps her on a natural high

But the words won't come out
When she tries to tell you
That she is beginning to love you more and more,
That whatever may, she wants to be with you

Sitting on the windowsill
Dreaming of the future,
Remembering the past
Sitting here, in an unbreakable trance

You are the ecstasy her mind thrives on
Suspended in time and space,
In an eternal bliss
And suddenly, she is all alone...

Life in slow-motion

Leafless trees
Lifeless faces
Cloudy skies
Noise and darkness
Madness

Broken, freezing
The birds have stopped chirping
No one is smiling
All walk with poise, poison
Hide your tears, sister...

Stand tall
Do not scream
Do not fear
Hold on tight
Hide your tears, brother...

Two feet tall, sister

Two dolls
Two dogs
Two beds
Two plates
For two little hearts
Two feet tall
Little trolls
Little girls

Little dolls
Little dogs
Little beds
Little plates
For two little hearts
Two feet tall
Little trolls
Little girls

Two little hearts
Afraid of the dark
Hiding from monsters
Smiling at others
Two little hearts
Scared of the world
Wishing for better
Wishing forever...

Two feet tall, brother

Two dolls
Two dogs
Two beds
Two plates
For two little hearts
Two feet tall
Little trolls
Little girls

Little dolls
Little dogs
Little beds
Little plates
For two little hearts
Two feet tall
Incomplete
Until there were three

Three little trolls
Three little hearts
Two feet tall

The Prince and the Vagabond

Heavy with secrets
A mighty Prince
Bemused a Fury
And ran to the edge of the world
Crying to the stars
Screaming his story
There, he met a soothing vagabond
Who shed on his life
Thousands of roses
And showed him marvels
Red velvet coats
And cannons and songs
That could speak
To drums and ghosts

To Kal⁸

O, Mother, what do you know of the old Lady?

Have you seen her soul evil?

O, Mother, did you forget Guillaume and Mahe⁹?

Have you forgiven the Commodore's¹⁰ ill?

O, Mother, did Charles¹¹ not write their spite?

Do you not approve Bernardin's¹² skill?

O, Mother, do you truly revere Guy, Gaetan and
Abdool¹³?

Tell us how you honour Satcam, Aneerood and Chacha's
will¹⁴?

⁸ Kal means time in Sanskrit, a play on the words Kali (loving goddess mother) and time, kal

⁹ Guillaume Dufresne D'Arsel takes possession of Mauritius as his port of call en route to India; Mahe de Labourdonnais established Port Louis as naval base

¹⁰ Commodore Josias Rowley captured the Vieux Grand Port in Mauritius in 1810, against the French Pierre Bouvet. In 1814, under the Treatise of Paris, Mauritius would finally become property of the British

¹¹ Charles Baudelaire

¹² Bernardin de St Pierre, author of Mauritian tale "Paul et Virginie"

¹³ Guy Rozemont; Gaetan Duval; Abdool Razack Mohammed

¹⁴ Satcam Boolell; Aneerood Jugnauth; Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam

An Ode to the Free

In ninety-four shades black
Of coffin and tombstone
May the Cloth your soul bless
And your life forever mourn

In one symphony
Ghost lip and lilac rose
May your Flock crown your death
And your valour pen in prose

In two tones shaky
Until bone is borne free
May the Three conspire
And your death hail on knee

The Ticker

The Ticker knows
Nothing lasts forever
Life, stories
Friend and lover

It tries not to get angry

And screams to the sky
To change this bitter end
A treasure against the tides of time
Like footprints in the sand



Teena
found a
pen one day, a
beautiful Cartier
that her father so
delicately kept in soft
cotton in a drawer. It was
mesmerising. She tried it.
And on that day, blue on white became
her ill, perhaps today more of a skill. Unsure,
she has never stopped writing about those people she
knew, lives lost, wars fought, orphan migrants, all those things
she heard, too much for her brain, but never enough for her pen.
Sometimes too painful to write about, her stories took form in poetic
verses, a language easier to hide truths into. Two things Teena has since
then known: She would forever write about Mauritius, her motherland,
happy or otherwise.

Moshumee Teena Dewoo was born a child of Surinam in Mauritius, on a 23rd December. She grew up in between a mountain and the beach, running the fields and climbing trees, and her head in books, and learning of things that her parents and grandparents thought best she knew. Her life would forever be influenced by a combatant grandfather, a baptised grandmother, a teaching mother and a Hindu father, all descendants of migrants constantly seeking to define themselves and the world around them through words...



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Common Initiative Group
P.O. Box 902 Mankon
Bamenda
North West Region
Cameroon

ISBN 978-9956-791-85-9



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